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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 001167

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STATE FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A, S/CRS, SA/PB, S/CT,
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/25/2016
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#) [IR](#) [RU](#)
SUBJECT: FM SPANTA'S SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR ON IRAN

REF: A. STATE 37801
[1](#)B. KABUL 1031
[1](#)C. KABUL 919

Classified By: Political Counselor Sara Rosenberry for reasons 1.4 (B)
and (D).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Afghanistan is acutely aware of U.S. concerns over Iran's nuclear program and will study U.S. non-paper and UNSCR 1747. Foreign Minister Spanta's Senior Policy Advisor, Davood Moradian, expressed to Embassy April 4 concerns over the formation of both the National Unity Council and National Front which he characterized as creatures of Iran and Russia. He expressed concern they represented a return to "the politics of the 1990s" and underlined Afghanistan's wish for improved relations with its neighbors, particularly Iran, in order to marginalize foreign influences in the country. Moradian requested U.S. assistance to beef up the MFA's public affairs function. END SUMMARY
Iran Sanctions

[1](#)2. (C) On April 4, during a regular periodic meeting, PolCouns delivered ref A (regarding UNSCR 1747 which imposes new sanctions on Iran) to Foreign Minister Spanta's Senior Policy Advisor, Davood Moradian. Moradian said he was well aware of U.S. concerns and would study the points and get back to Embassy with any reactions.

National Unity Council: Iran and Russia Behind It

[1](#)3. (C) PolCouns raised U.S. concerns over the emergence of the new National Unity Council (NUC) which wants to place restrictions on international military forces in Afghanistan (ref B). Moradian agreed it was a very troublesome development. He said Iran and Russia were clearly behind the NUC and were working together. Moradian believes that the

new National Front (ref C), which is advocating a Parliamentary system and the direct election of governors, is also an Iranian-Russian product. He said many were concerned that "puppets" of Iran, Pakistan and India were emerging in the Parliament and organizing themselves into various groups.

Moradian expressed concern that the "politics of the 1990s" were again being played out in Afghanistan.

¶4. (C) Regarding the NUC's future prospects, Moradian said much would depend on how the NUC presented itself to President Karzai and how Karzai would be able to manipulate the group himself. Karzai needed to form his own political group since his supporters were fragmented while the opposition was united. Moradian said that Karzai would run for re-election but would need to make changes or he would be defeated. He described Karzai as showing courage in dealing with Pakistan and needing to display the same qualities in confronting his domestic opponents. In response to PolCounselor reiterating U.S. concern with Karzai using the press -- including the American press -- to criticize Pakistan, Moradian said that President Karzai's attacks on Pakistan should not be viewed as personal attacks on Musharraf.

Managing Relations With Iran

¶5. (C) Moradian explained that "special representatives" from the Iranian government had recently visited Foreign Minister Spanta to express GOI concern over the resurgence of the Taliban. Iran had expressed concern about Musa Qala, arguing that Taliban success in Helmand gave them no choice but to prepare themselves for the possible return to power of the Taliban in the western provinces and possibly nationally.

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Moradian explained that one of the reasons Afghanistan needed normal relations with Iran was to marginalize the pro-Iranian groups in the country. He noted that the U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership caused friction with Afghanistan's neighbors, but particularly since its neighbors were not being helpful on security, Afghanistan made no excuses for choosing to go outside the region for security guarantees (i.e., the U.S. and ISAF). The U.S. would remain the priority country for Afghanistan but a balance had to be struck between forging a close relationship with the U.S. and not being perceived as a threat to its neighbors.

¶6. (C) Moradian said relations with Russia required a similar balancing act. He shared that Foreign Minister Spanta had tried to convince the Russians that the best way to have good relations with Afghanistan was not by means of close relations with the Northern Alliance. Russia did not need them to improve its relations with Afghanistan. Similarly with India, Moradian said that it had a tendency to try to go beyond the Afghan central government when it should be strengthening relations with core institutions. Moradian repeated that Afghanistan did not want a return to the "politics of the 1990s".

NEUMANN